

List of other Ornithological Publications received.

- HOWARD, H. E. *British Warblers*. (Pt. 8. London, 1913.)
 MATHEWS, G. M. *The Birds of Australia*. (Vol. iii. Pts. 4, 5, 1914.)
 SALVADORI, T., & FESTA, E. *Nuova specie di Frosone della Sardegna*.
 (Boll. Mus. Zool. Anat. Torino, xxix. No. 681, 1914.)
 SCHALOW, H. *Über Calamohërpe brehmii Müller. Über das Brut-*
Vorkommen von Nucifraga caryocatactes caryocatactes L. in Thür-
ingen. (Journ. f. Orn. January 1914.)
 Aquila. (Tom. xx. Budapest, 1913.)
 The Auk. (Vol. xxxix. No. 1, 1914.)
 The Austral Avian Record. (Vol. ii. No. 4. London, 1914.)
 Avicultural Magazine. (3rd Series, Vol. v. Nos. 3-5, 1914.)
 Bird Lore. (Vol. xv. No. 6; Vol. xvi. No. 1, 1913.)
 British Birds. (Vol. vii. Nos. 8-10, 1914.)
 The Condor. (Vol. xvi. No. 1, 1914.)
 The Emu. (Vol. xiii. pt. 3, 1914.)
 Journ. f. Ornith. (Vol. lxii. Heft 1, 1914.)
 Victoria Memorial Museum, Bulletin. (No. 1. Ottawa, 1913.)
 Zoologischer Anzeiger. (Bd. xliii. Nos. 7-13, 1914.)

XIX.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.*

THE following letters have been received :—

SIR,—In the April number of 'The Ibis' of last year, you were kind enough to publish a few lines from me expressing the belief that two eggs from the Tristram Collection, taken on Grand Manan many years ago and thought to be those of *Passerculus princeps*, "must have been laid by *P. savanna*." Their recent describer, in a note immediately following mine on the same page, dissents from this opinion, maintaining that inasmuch as they "were labelled and presumably identified by Mr. T. M. Brewer, the well-known American ornithologist, and as Mr. Ridgway, in his recent work on the 'Birds of North and Middle America,' states that *Passerculus princeps* breeds on Sable Island and other islands off Nova Scotia, there seems to be no sufficient reason to alter or doubt the identification."

Unfortunately for this contention it is, in reality, unsupported by Mr. Ridgway's statement, which stands as follows :—
 "Breeding on Sable Island (and other islands?) off Nova

Scotia." By enclosing the words "and other islands" in parentheses and following them with a question mark, Mr. Ridgway has made it perfectly clear that what he intended to signify was merely that there *may* be—not certainly *are*—breeding stations other than the only known one, a possibility which cannot be denied and hence should not be wholly ignored, despite ever accumulating negative evidence that tends ever more and more strongly to discredit it. Such uncertainty has practically ceased to exist, however, as regards Grand Manan, for the avifauna of that island—which, by the way, lies not "off Nova Scotia" in the usual sense of the term, but on the opposite side of the Bay of Fundy, within sight of the coast of Maine—has been very carefully investigated within recent years by several excellent field ornithologists, who report that the Savanna Sparrow is apparently the only species of *Passerculus* which occurs there in summer.

I am, Sir,

Yours &c.,

WILLIAM BREWSTER.

Cambridge, Massachusetts,
5 December, 1913.

SIR,—I desire to direct the attention of ornithologists to a memoir upon the peroneal muscles of birds published in the December part of the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society.' The author, Dr. P. Chalmers Mitchell, describes those muscles in a large number of birds belonging to all of the chief groups, and deduces therefrom a table in which the main variations of the muscles are illustrated in a graphic form.

While it may be useful to possess within the compass of a few pages the principal variations of these, after all, rather well-known muscles, it is entirely opposed to the methods adopted universally by zoologists to ignore to so large an extent, as has Dr. Mitchell, the work of previous observers.

Dr. Mitchell rightly allows to Dr. Gadow the credit of having contributed the most considerable account extant

of these muscles; but this bare statement would not lead the reader to realise how large in reality is Dr. Gadow's contribution to the matter. For in a long account occupying 28 pages, Dr. Mitchell only refers to Dr. Gadow as having dealt with *Aptenodytes*, *Serpentarius*, *Pandion*, Parrots, and *Pelargopsis*. Whereas that gentleman has described the peroneals also in Owls, *Cypselus*, *Bucorvus*, *Momotus*, *Eurystomus*, *Podargus*, *Corythaix*, *Caprimulgus*, *Cuculus*, *Pici*, *Tubinares*, *Podiceps*, *Lamellirostres*, *Otis*, *Grus*, *Ciconia*, *Ardea*, *Phænicopterus*, *Pterocles*, *Uria*, *Larus*, *Alca*, *Pelecanus*, *Talegalla*, *Euplocamus*, *Crax*, *Columbæ*, etc. Nor does Dr. Mitchell refer to myself except to point out that I am mistaken in my account of these muscles in Penguins and Alcedinidæ. But in my 'Structure and Classification of Birds' I have referred to the peroneals in the *Capitonidæ*, *Momotidæ*, *Caprimulgidæ*, *Musophagi*, *Striges*, *Psittaci*, *Accipitres*, and in some other forms, in all of which statements I find that Dr. Mitchell agrees with me. Furthermore, in no fewer than twelve papers published either in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society' or in 'The Ibis,' I have incidentally described the peroneal muscles in *Carpococcyx*, *Anastomus*, *Plotus*, *Heliornis*, *Podica*, *Rhynchops*, *Æchmophorus*, various *Caprimulgidæ*, *Scopus*, and *Rhinocetus*.

Yours faithfully,

FRANK E. BEDDARD.

Zoological Gardens,
Regent's Park,
5 Jan., 1914.

SIR,—On the first page of the memoir to which Dr. Beddard refers I wrote as follows:—"On looking up the literature relating to the peroneal muscles in birds, I found that even Dr. Gadow's careful description of these muscles (Bronn's Thier-Reich, Aves, pp. 180-182) was based on a relatively small number of individuals and types, and that his work, together with the insignificant contributions of earlier and later writers, supplied only a vague and dubious

picture of the anatomical facts." Dr. Beddard's "Structure and Classification of Birds" was published six or seven years later, but the references to the peroneals therein contained are so much less adequate that it was unnecessary to mention them. My object was to try to understand the relations of the various modifications of the muscles and their distribution in the whole group. For this purpose I found little in Gadow and nothing in Beddard to assist me, and I dissected the muscles in some 400 birds. If, however, the whole of the facts had already been adequately recorded, I should have been saved much time, but should still have had the paper to write. Descriptive anatomy is only the raw material of the contribution to ornithology of which the memoir in question is an instalment.

Yours very truly,

P. CHALMERS MITCHELL.

Zoological Society of London,
2 Feb., 1914.

SIR,—The allusion made by Mr. W. P. Pyecraft to the injudicious action taken by certain Fishery Boards ('Ibis,' 1914, p. 142), who imagine that they are doing service by advocating the slaughter of Cormorants and Gannets, gives rise to a good deal of reflection. If the toll of fish which these birds take is so serious, why are there still so many fish in the sea? This seems a fair argument for the non-advocates of slaughter, especially as the European Gannet (*Sula bassana*) is believed to be on the increase.

Will you permit me to communicate the following returns—which indeed would seem almost incredible were they not made on the best authority—of the celebrated Herring-fishery at Great Yarmouth in this county, for 1913. They are taken from the official figures, which the Harbour-master is required to issue annually at each of the great ports. The Herring season in the North Sea lasts approximately from September to December, and last year (1913) it ended, as far as Yarmouth trawlers were concerned, on December 20th. In these three months *eight hundred and*

twenty-four million, two hundred and thirteen thousand (824,213,000) herrings were brought into the port of Great Yarmouth, and nearly five hundred and thirty-seven millions into the adjoining harbour of Lowestoft. This takes no account of the seventy-five millions which were brought into Grimsby Docks, or of the multitudes carried into Lerwick, Stornoway, and various other places where the fishery is carried on. Having regard to such figures as these, who can question there being enough fish in the sea for man and the birds too?

The fecundity which the herring, mackerel, whiting, sprat, etc., display, is something altogether astounding; in fact, the process of thinning out their numbers which Gannets and other sea-birds perform, should, as Mr. Pycraft has well remarked, be regarded as beneficent rather than otherwise.

Near the shore, and at or in the vicinity of river-mouths, or near their breeding-places, it is conceivable that Gannets and other sea-birds may be inimical to the interests of the fishermen. That much may be admitted, but so long as such vast numbers of fish continue to be netted in British Seas, it is impossible to argue that Gannets, Cormorants, Shags, Guillemots, and Puffins affect the fish supply, except locally, and accordingly it is a wrong policy altogether to destroy them.

If Gannets do harm, why is it that the trawling grounds on the west Hebridean coast, all of them within easy flight of St. Kilda, are among the best that are known to Scotch fishermen? St. Kilda and adjacent islands are the largest metropolis of Gannets and Puffins in the world, but it is evident that the fecundity of herrings, mackerel, haddock, coal-fish, etc. is more than equal to the consumption by these birds, helped as they are by Guillemots, Razorbills, Shags, and Gulls, which breed there in tens of thousands, as many visitors to Borrera, Stack Armine, and Stack Lii testify.

J. H. GURNEY.

Keswick Hall, Norfolk,
23 January, 1914.

SIR,—In the 'Revue Française d'Ornithologie' for April 1913, the Comte de Tristan records his finding an egg of the Great Auk in a cupboard which probably had not been opened for 80 years. Upon my attention being called to this communication by Mr. H. F. Witherby, I wrote to the Comte asking his permission to photograph the egg and this was at once most kindly given. Early in August, accompanied by Mr. Henry Stevens, I visited the Comte at the Chateau L'Emérillon and obtained negatives of the egg. Its history, so far as I have been able to gather, is as follows:—

It belonged to the Marquis de Tristan, the grandfather of the present Marquis and great grandfather of the Comte. When Comte de Tristan he travelled a great deal and brought home many interesting specimens, notably this egg. He formed the collections of minerals, fossils, shells, mosses, etc., now in the Museum at Orleans. His herbarium and many manuscripts are still at L'Emérillon, and with many mementoes of his travels remained, since his death in January 1861, in a cupboard until 1910, at which time the Comte, who is much interested in birds and eggs, discovered them. The egg measures 138 × 76 millimetres; it has a pale yellow ground-colour, and the larger end is well covered with black markings. On one side is written in faded ink the word "Pingouin." When discovered the egg was found to be badly fractured about 1½ inches from the smaller end.

This brings the number of recorded eggs to 74. There has been an interval of 14 years since I last communicated a like discovery to 'The Ibis.'

I am, Sir,

Yours &c.,

EDWARD BIDWELL.

1 Trig Lane, E.C.,

12 Jan., 1914.

The Annual General Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union, 1914.—The Annual Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union for 1914 was held on March the 17th at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W., as the date selected clashed with meetings held by the Zoological Society and consequently their rooms were not available. The Chair was taken by the President, Col. R. G. Wardlaw-Ramsay, and there were about seventy Members present.

The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting were read and confirmed.

The Secretary then read the following Report of the Committee for the past year:—

“The Committee regret that they have to report a decrease in the funds of the Union during the past year, although the membership has increased from 425 to 433. The accounts, which have been audited in detail by Mr. D. Seth-Smith, show that the total receipts in 1913 were £608 6s. 7d. as compared with £663 19s. 10d. in the previous year; and the total payments amounted to £634 9s. 8d. as against £630 4s. 5d. in 1912. The balance carried forward to 1914 was £112 19s. 4d.

“The Annual Volume of ‘The Ibis’ for 1913, published in due course, is the fifty-fifth volume, and the first of the Tenth Series, under the editorship of Mr. W. L. Sclater. It contains 745 pages, and is illustrated with six coloured and four photographic plates, three maps, and two text-figures.

“With regret the Committee report the deaths of the following Members since the last Annual General Meeting:—Major G. E. H. Barrett-Hamilton, Capt. J. A. Doig, Dr. J. W. B. Gunning, Mr. F. V. McConnell, Dr. P. L. Sclater, Mr. H. P. Senhouse, Mr. R. J. Ussher, and Dr. A. R. Wallace.

“The following gentlemen have resigned :—Earl Darnley, Lord Walsingham, and Mr. Jeffery Whitehead.

“The names of Messrs. Harry Becher, Norman Gilroy, G. M. Hedges, and Stuart Maples, have been removed from the List of Members under Rule 6.

“The membership of the Union, and comparison with the previous five years is as follows :—

	1914.	1913.	1912.	1911.	1910.	1909.
Ordinary Members...	433	425	420	419	424	422
Extraordinary „	1	2	3	3	3	2
Honorary „	7	8	9	9	9	10
Hon. Lady „	6	5	6	4
Colonial „	9	9	9	10	9	8
Foreign „	19	19	20	19	20	19

“There are 23 Candidates for Ordinary Membership, 2 for Honorary, 1 for Colonial, and 3 for Foreign Membership.

“After due consideration the Committee decided to transfer the agency for the sale of the B. O. U. publications from Mr. R. H. Porter to Messrs. William Wesley & Son, and to place the distribution to Members in the hands of the printers, Messrs. Taylor & Francis. These arrangements will somewhat reduce the cost of distribution, and the Committee also hope that the new conditions will improve the sales of the Union’s publications.

“The Committee have decided that instead of having varying reductions on the different publications issued by the Union, in future all such publications shall be available for purchase by Members at the uniform reduction of 25% off the published prices. The stock is being thoroughly overhauled, and a list of the publications now in stock will be published in the circular issued with each part of the ‘The Ibis’ as soon as possible.

“The new edition of the B. O. U. List of British Birds is now in the press, and the Committee hope that it will be possible to issue it during the course of the present year.

“The compilation of the new General Index to ‘The Ibis’ for the years 1895 to 1912 was commenced early in December last and is progressing steadily.”

The statement of accounts for the year 1913, previously circulated to the members, was submitted and approved, and a vote of thanks was accorded to the Auditor, Mr. D. Seth-Smith.

The Meeting then proceeded to elect the Officers for the ensuing year, and it was announced that Mr. E. C. Stuart Baker had been re-elected Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, and that Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant had been elected a member of the Committee in the place of Dr. N. F. Ticehurst, who retired by rotation.

The following twenty-one gentlemen were duly elected Ordinary Members of the Union:—Thomas P. Aldworth; Colonel Robert Betham; Robert O. Blyth, M.A.; Colonel Kenneth Buchanan, I.A.; The Rev. F. Courtois, S.J.; Cecil M. Dyer; Laurence A. Curtis Edwards, M.A.; Robert Etheridge, Junr., C.M.Z.S.; John N. Kennedy; Major John Lindsay-Smith, I.A.; Willoughby P. Lowe; John C. Moulton; Charles R. S. Pitman; James Wall-Row; Dr. Hans Sauer, F.Z.S.; John Stewart; Erwin Stresemann; Lewis R. Sutherland, M.B., C.M.; The Marquis of Tavistock, F.Z.S.; Chaplin C. Treatt; Percy F. Wickham.

It was also resolved that Dr. Valentine Bianchi and Prof. Herman Schalow, at present Foreign Members of the Union, should be transferred to the list of Honorary Members.

Dr. John Albert Leach, M.A., was elected a Colonial Member, and the following three gentlemen were elected Foreign Members:—Herr Carl E. Hellmayr, M.B.O.U.; Dr. Witmer Stone; Prof. Dr. A. J. Einar Lönnberg, F.M.Z.S.

The following alteration to Rule 7, proposed by Mr. C. D. Borrer, and seconded by Mr. C. G. Talbot-Ponsonby, was agreed to:—

That the following portion of Rule 7, which now stands as follows :—

‘ the Secretary shall be directed to send a registered letter to that Member, stating the facts brought before the Committee and asking for an explanation of the same, but without mentioning the source from which such information was obtained.’

Shall be altered to read thus :—

‘ the Secretary shall be directed to send a registered letter to that Member, stating the nature of the offence of which he is accused, together with the name of the informant, or the source of information, and asking for an explanation of the same.’

The resolution of sympathy and support in favour of the ‘Plumage Bill’ now before the House of Commons was discussed at length, and the following motion was carried unanimously :—

“That the British Ornithologists’ Union express their hearty sympathy with the principles of the Government Bill for prohibiting the importation of the skins and plumage of Wild Birds for millinery purposes, but beg that their elected representatives may be heard in Committee with regard to the details.”

In accordance with this resolution, it was agreed that the Committee of the Union should act as the representatives of the B. O. U. for this purpose.

Mr. W. L. Sclater’s motion “That ladies be admitted to Ordinary Membership of the British Ornithologists’ Union” was next discussed, but on being put to the Meeting was declared not carried.

A vote of thanks to the Zoological Society for the use of their Offices and Rooms during the past year was unanimously passed.

The meeting then adjourned to attend the Annual Dinner, which was held in conjunction with the monthly Dinner of the British Ornithologists’ Club.

The Plumage Bill.—On March the 9th last the second reading of the Plumage Bill was passed by the House of Commons by a majority of 297 to 15.

This bill, the object of which is to prohibit the importation, for trade purposes, of the plumage of all foreign birds (except Ostriches and Eider Ducks), was first drafted by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds with the support of representatives of the Natural History Museum and of the Royal and other Societies in 1908. It was introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Avebury and passed that House on July the 21st, 1908, with strengthening amendments. It was introduced into the House of Commons by Lord Robert Cecil, but the end of the session prevented a second reading being taken.

What is essentially the same bill was introduced at the end of last session (Aug. 4, 1913) by Mr. Hobhouse on the part of the Government and was backed by Mr. E. S. Montagu and Mr. Sydney Buxton, and it is this bill which was read a second time on March the 9th last.

The following are the principal clauses of the bill as it now stands :—

1.—(1) Subject to the exceptions in this Act contained, a person shall not import into the United Kingdom the plumage of any wild bird, and accordingly section forty-two of the Customs Consolidation Act, 1876, shall be read as if there were included in the table of prohibitions and restrictions therein—

“The plumage of wild birds as defined by the Importation of Plumage (Prohibition) Act, 1914, subject to the exceptions contained in that Act.”

(2) A person shall not have in his possession or be concerned in selling the plumage of any wild bird which has been imported in contravention of this Act, or which, having been allowed to be imported on the ground that it is being put to a certain use or intended to be put to a certain use, is being put to some other use; and if any person has in his possession or is concerned in selling any such plumage, he shall be liable on conviction under the Summary Jurisdiction Acts to a fine not exceeding five pounds in respect of the first offence and twenty-five pounds in respect of the second or any subsequent offence, and the court before whom he is convicted may order the forfeiture or destruction of any plumage in respect of which the offence has been committed.

2.—(1) The following plumage is excepted from the prohibition on importation under this Act:—

- (a) The plumage of birds for the time being included in the Schedule to this Act [*i. e.* Ostriches, Eider Ducks]:
- (b) The plumage of birds imported alive:
- (c) The plumage of birds imported under a licence granted under this Act for the purpose of supplying specimens for any natural history or other museum, or for the purpose of scientific research:
- (d) The plumage of wild birds ordinarily used as articles of diet and imported for that purpose.

(2) His Majesty may by Order in Council from time to time add the name of any bird to the Schedule to this Act or remove the name of any bird from that Schedule.

(3) The Board of Trade shall grant a licence under such conditions and regulations as they think fit to any person to import specimens of birds for any natural history or other museum, or for the purpose of scientific research.

(4) Any importer claiming an exemption under this section for any plumage on the ground that it is to be put to a certain use shall deliver to an officer of the Customs and Excise, if required by any such officer, on importation a written declaration of the purpose for which it is imported.

3. Where the court is satisfied in any proceedings under this Act, that any plumage is the plumage of a bird which is never or rarely found alive in a wild state in the United Kingdom, the plumage shall be deemed to be imported in contravention of this Act unless the contrary is proved.

4. In this Act—

The expression “plumage” includes the skin or body of a bird with the plumage on it;

The expression “sell” includes exchange and let out on hire;

The expression “importer” has the same meaning as in the Customs Consolidation Act, 1876.

5. This Act may be cited as the Importation of Plumage (Prohibition) Act, 1914, and shall come into operation on the first day of January nineteen hundred and fifteen.